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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001484

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SUBJECT: INDIAN NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR PLEDGES TO
COORDINATE WITH THE US IN CONTACTS WITH NEPAL'S MAOISTS

REF: A) KATHMANDU 1461 (NOTAL)

Classified by: Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski for
reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (S) Summary. According to the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, India's National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra has reaffirmed the Indian Government's (GOI's) policy of synchronizing with the U.S. its tough talking points for Nepal's Maoist leaders. Mishra reportedly also pledged that his Government, in its dialogue with the Maoists, has never encouraged the militants to attack or to threaten US interests in Nepal. End summary.

2. (S) Shyam Saran, Indian Ambassador to Nepal, called on the Ambassador on August 4 to report on the results of his promised efforts (reftel) to ensure that no agency of the GOI was giving Nepal's Maoists the impression that it condoned attacks or threats on US interests here. Saran said that in order to ensure that he received an authoritative statement of GOI policy, undistorted by possibly conflicting agendas of different foreign affairs agencies, he went right to the top--talking by phone to Principal Secretary and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra.

3. (S) With evident satisfaction Saran reported that Mishra had confirmed unequivocally that no agency of the GOI has ever been authorized to make any statement encouraging Nepal's Maoists to attack or to threaten US interests in Nepal. Mishra reportedly went on to say that he had never felt that the US and India are operating at cross purposes in our respective policies toward Nepal and the Maoists. Mishra said he had made this point repeatedly in his candid discussions at higher levels of the USG, including with his counterpart, Dr. Rice. Ranjit Rae, Joint Secretary for Nepal and Bhutan in the Foreign Ministry, would be underscoring this point to the US Embassy in New Delhi on behalf of Mishra, Saran said.

4. (S) Saran went on to explain that the GOI would continue to adhere to the basic talking points with the Maoists to which he and the Ambassador had agreed. As he expressed them, these points are the following:

-- The nature of the GOI's relations with the Maoists would be determined by the actions of the Maoists themselves. If the Maoists wanted to be treated by the GOI as a legitimate political party they would have to give up violence and terrorism.

-- If, as all Indian intelligence now indicates, the Maoists continue to engage in such criminal behavior on Indian soil as gun running and cooperation with Indian Naxalites, the Indian Government may attack them.

-- If the Maoists are truly committed, as they say, to multiparty democracy, they must end threats of violence against their political opponents and provide a level playing field for other parties to operate in areas where the Maoists are active militarily. In particular, no election to a constituent assembly (a persistent Maoist demand) or any other body would be possible under the threat of Maoist guns.

5. (S) Saran caveated the foregoing points by asserting that his government had had no direct contact with the Maoists in New Delhi. He said that reports that the Maoist leadership, now in India, had sent a letter to the GOI requesting its support for going back to war against the Nepal Government had not been substantiated; no such letter had been received by the GOI. He confirmed that his DCM had had a single meeting with Baburam Bhattarai in Kathmandu and "some of his folks" had met with Maoist spokesman Mahara. He added that Indian officials have met on occasion with Maoist surrogates or "go betweens."

6. (S) Comment. Amb Saran's quick response to the issues that the Ambassador had raised with him just three days earlier (reftel) strengthens our high regard for him as a

sincere and cooperative colleague. However disingenuous, his denial that his government has established a continuing dialogue with the Maoist leadership is not surprising given the sensitive nature of that dialogue. The clear affirmation by the National Security Advisor that the GOI wants to coordinate with the U.S. its overt policy toward Nepal and the Maoists is good news, as is his statement that the GOI is not encouraging the Maoists to oppose US interests here. It is still possible, of course, that lower-ranking officers of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) have encouraged the Maoists to oppose US activities and influence in Nepal without authorization and without reporting these comments to senior GOI officials. All this underscores how far we have come in establishing a constructive dialogue with the Indians on Nepal, and how far we have yet to go to gain their full cooperation.

Malinowski